UPLIFTING ADOLESCENTS PROJECT

WORKSHOP REPORT

MENTORING AND PEER COUNSELLING

for

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)

Medallion Hall, Kingston 10

May 2-4, 2000

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Introduction

Development Associates Inc. conducted a ***Mentoring and Peer Counselling Workshop*** for staff of non-government organisations (NGOs) participating in the Uplifting of Adolescents Project (UAP) as sub-grantees. The workshop was held at the Medallion Hall Hotel, Kingston, during May 2-4, 2000.

As indicated by the *List of Participants* (***Appendix I***), 14 NGOs sent staff to receive this training. There was also one participant from Hope for Children Development Co. Ltd.   In summary, NGO participation was as follows:

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
No. of Persons	26	28	30

The main objectives of the workshop were to enable NGO staff to develop the skills to:

1. design, implement and effectively sustain Mentoring Programmes in their organisations; and

2. design, organise and implement Peer Counselling Programmes as part of their work with at-risk youth.

In order to facilitate the achievement of those objectives, the programme (See ***Appendix II***) for the 2½ days of training was weighted towards providing participants with opportunities to practise the techniques and guidelines imparted to them.

Presenters were:

1. **Mrs. Betty Ann Blaine**, Founder and Executive Director of Youth Opportunities Unlimited, who has successfully pioneered and sustained a focus on the use of mentoring programmes for Jamaican at-risk youth; and

2. **Mrs. Hope McNish**, HRD Consultant, with considerable public and private sector experience in training and development, as well as in designing, implementing and sustaining peer counselling programmes.

Overall facilitation of the workshop was carried out by Mrs. Sandra Cooper, UAP Training Co-ordinator, with assistance from other Development Associates employees.

It is hoped that this Summary Report will be used, by all NGO staff involved with the UAP, as a continuous source of reference on the 'dos and don'ts' of administering effective mentoring and peer counselling programmes.

Summary of Workshop Proceedings

DAY 1

Welcome and Introductions

Following their registration, participants were welcomed by Mrs. Sandra Cooper, UAP Training Co-ordinator before she invited Mr. Frank Valva, UAP Chief of Party, to address the assembly.

In his brief remarks, Mr. Valva thanked participants for the time they had allocated for attendance at the workshop. He affirmed his organisation's awareness that NGOs had a strong desire and need to integrate mentoring and peer counselling into their UAP activity. He pointed out that the effectiveness of the two strategies had been proven through research in the USA and elsewhere. Since he was convinced that those strategies would enhance NGO efforts to change the lives of the at-risk adolescents enrolled in the UAP, he hoped that the workshop would enable participants to implement effective mentoring and peer counselling programmes.

Next, Mrs. Cooper introduced Mrs. Joan Davis, Project Management Specialist with USAID, the agency funding the UAP, and invited her to say a few words. Mrs. Davis brought greetings on behalf of USAID and stressed the importance of monitoring and peer counselling being provided for at-risk youth, who were now being faced with more diverse difficulties than obtained for previous generations. She urged participants to sharpen their participatory skills, so as to ensure that they had a productive training experience.

Mrs. Cooper also introduced members of the workshop administrative support team (Mrs. Marsha Hylton and Mr. Rohan Wilson of Development Associates; Mrs. Beverley Butler, Workshop Rapporteur), as well as Mrs. Betty Ann Blaine, who would be the presenter for the day's sessions on Mentoring.

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A STRUCTURED YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAMME

Mrs. Blaine began by reviewing the specific objectives for the day's training. She then emphasised that a mentoring programme would only be effective if it was properly structured. The tremendous value of informal individual mentoring was recognised, but organisations needed to have structured programmes.

She said that, during the nine years in which it had been engaged in youth mentoring, her organisation, Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU), had proved that the mentoring relationship was a powerful intervention strategy that could bring about absolutely amazing, visible and positive changes in a relatively short period.

<u>Opening Exercise</u>

Immediately after her introductory comments, the presenter asked participants to engage in a four-minute exercise, for which she gave the following instructions:

- Form pairs, and sit facing your partner.
- Speak to each other in turn for 2 minutes stating your name, the identity of 2 persons who have been mentors to you during your lifetime, and why these persons still stand out in your mind as being mentors.
- The listener should not interrupt the speaker during his/her monologue.

At the end of the time period, participants were asked how the exercise had made them feel. The consensus reply was "Good". After further probing, other replies given related to the importance of being listened to and the fact that listening intently for two minutes, without interrupting, was not easy. The reactions paved the way for the presenter to stress that good listening was very important in a mentoring relationship. It made the speaker sense respect, encouragement and the importance being placed on what he or she was saying.

With the liberal use of transparencies (which were later copied and given to participants), Mrs. Blaine covered the key elements of designing and implementing a structured mentoring programme.

1.   Why Mentoring?

Mrs. Blaine posed the question: Why is mentoring so important, particularly in the context of present-day Jamaica? In response, participants cited family breakdown, lack of parental guidance, poor parental skills, negative social influences, and the like. She then displayed a summary of the justification for the mentoring process:

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Why Mentoring?

- Breakdown of the Family Structure
- Adolescent Population increasingly "At Risk" — <u>All</u> adolescents are at risk, because of social and economic environmental conditions
- Mentoring is a Powerful Intervention Strategy — Y.O.U. can attest to this
- Statistics globally support the effectiveness of mentoring.

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Emphasis was also placed on the urgent need for making young people know that there was someone always there to encourage them and care about what was happening to them.

2. What is Mentoring?

The following definition of "mentoring" was given:

Mentoring Defined

Mentoring is a one-to-one relationship over a prolonged period of time between a youth and an adult who provides consistent support, guidance and concrete help, particularly as the younger person goes through a difficult or challenging situation or period in life.

The goal of mentoring is to help protégés gain the skills and confidence to be responsible for their own futures, including, and with an increased emphasis on, academic and occupational skills

The basic elements of the process were also identified.

Elements of a Mentoring Programme

➢ Goal is to help protégés develop self-confidence and independence.

➢ Mentors and protégés ('mentees') are matched by needs and resources.

➢ Mentors are committed to providing consistent, caring and concrete help for at least one year.

➢ Both mentors and protégés benefit and learn.

➢ Support system is in place for mentors and protégés.

➢ Parents of protégés are involved and supported in their role.

➢ Programme is evaluated to determine its impact over time.

Youth Mentoring was described as a tripartite arrangement involving mentor (the adult), protégé or 'mentee' (the young person) and the protégé's parent or care-giver, if any. The usual **mentoring roles and goals** were to:

- give academic support
- build self-esteem and self-confidence
- provide positive role models
- supply individual attention and concern
- foster accountability (e.g., mentors must keep any promises made to their 'mentees'; protégés taught that they must assume responsibility for the consequences of their actions).

Programme elements could be modified to meet an organisation's particular needs or primary goal. Y.O.U.'s goal was to help young people to attain their fullest potential. They aimed at helping children stay in school until their successful graduation, and this also involved inspiring their self-motivation to become useful, independent adult citizens. Consequently, there was a special focus on providing academic and personal development support.

It was important to note, however, that mentoring could not solve all the problems that young people in such a programme might be experiencing. It was also essential for programme administrators to establish linkages with other service organisations and support programmes so that referrals could be made when necessary. It should also be made clear to mentors that they must seek the programme administrator's advice when they were confronted with problem situations that required specialised expertise for their solution.

The Y.O.U. Mentoring Programme (Video Presentation)

Participants viewed a video prepared by Y.O.U. to inform potential participants, donors and others about their mentoring programme. The content highlighted mentoring's capacity to bridge the generation gap and/or 'social divide' to develop personal relationships in a constructive manner. Several persons (mentors, 'mentees', programme staff) testified to the programme's success in providing the guidance and support which many young people lacked. The presentation was received with acclaim from the audience.

3. Developing a Mentoring Programme

Group Activity

Following the coffee break, participants were divided into four working groups to prepare responses to 7 "Roles to Avoid" scenarios. Each group was asked to select a member to present its report, and ten minutes were allocated for the activity.

At the end of the period, the groups reported as follows:

Scenario #1:   Your 'mentee' is depressed and tells you that she doesn't want to wake up; her life has no value; she has lost her appetite. **What do you do?**

Group 1

Talk/coax 'mentee' into revealing the root of problem. Reinforce positive values and encourage appreciation of self-worth and personal contributions. Help him/her find solutions.

Group 2

The 'mentee' may be contemplating suicide and needs professional help. Quick action is necessary and he/she should not be left alone until expert assistance is accessed.

Group 3:

[Proposed action similar to Group 1].

Group 4:

Encourage the 'mentee' to identify and discuss what is causing her to feel depressed.

Presenter's Comments: The 'mentee's' symptoms are clear signs of suicidal intent. The mentor is not expected to be a professional counsellor. Prompt referral to professional help is indicated and should be arranged immediately. Ensure that the 'mentee' is closely monitored by someone until the situation is satisfactorily resolved.

Scenario #2:   Your 'mentee' says: "I'm going on a job interview. Could you come with me? If not, could you take care of my baby brother?" **What do you do?**

Group 1:

Take the 'mentee' to the interview and help her with her baby brother on that occasion, but make it clear that, in future, she will need to make some other arrangement well in advance of her need for such assistance.

Group 2:

Give support by rehearsing 'mentee' in interview techniques and, if possible, take him/her (and the baby) to interview.

Group 3:

[Proposed action similar to Group 2].

Group 4:

If possible, take care of the baby. If not, help the 'mentee' to find another temporary caregiver.

Scenario #3:   You have offered your advice on a subject and a day later your 'mentee' comes back to you with "my mother was angry; she didn't agree with your advice and said she was insulted". **What do you do?**

Group 1

Meet with the mother to ensure the advice was accurately conveyed and to clear up any misunderstandings that exist.

Group 2:

Apologise to the 'mentee' for the misunderstanding. Then verify that he/she understands the advice that was given and his/her mother's response. The mentor should then contact the mother to clarify what was said, and ensure that a good relationship is maintained

Group 3:

Meet with the parent, apologise for the friction which has been caused and try to arrive at a common understanding by explaining the basis of the advice given.

Group 4:

Meet with the mother and discuss what was said, so that the misunderstanding can be cleared up.

Scenario #4: You believe your 'mentee', who shows good potential, should plan to go to college. However, he/she says: "Absolutely not! I want to work as a Security Guard". **What do you do?**

Group 1

Show that further education is necessary to move ahead in any field including security, e.g., electronic and computer systems surveillance, supervisory, management and training positions.

Group 2:

Discuss the qualifications and duties of a Security Guard position and what further qualifications would be need to progress in that occupational field. Also discuss other career alternatives.

Group 3:

Encourage achievement of the desired goal but also suggest that the mentee could perhaps do part-time college studies while working as a Security Guard.

Group 4:

Give career counselling. Share information on what other jobs entail and arrange workplace exposure similar to Y.O.U.'s 'Shadow Week'. At the same time, encourage college plans by showing the benefits of continuing education in the modern competitive world, and explaining the need to have an adequate academic base to adapt to changing work requirements.

One participant also suggested that sometimes reluctance to commit to further education was due to underlying financial fears and the need to begin earning as soon as possible. The mentor should explore that possibility in the discussion with the 'mentee' and, in such a case, help to identify alternative sources of financial assistance.

Scenario #5:   Your 'mentee' has asked if you could take her to the country to visit her boyfriend. **What do you do?**

Group 1

Say no to taking her, but suggest that the boyfriend go with the mentor and 'mentee' on of their usual outings if her parents approve.

Group 2:

Say no and suggested that the 'mentee' ask his or her parent instead. Perhaps the boyfriend could come to meet the mentor.

Group 3:

Say no, but take advantage of the opportunity to explore boy-girl friendship in all its ramifications.

Group 4:

Absolutely not. Do not discuss with parent unless the 'mentee' agrees. (As a general rule, never betray confidentiality except in cases of potential harm to the 'mentee' or to others.)

Scenario #6:   Your 'mentee' is going for a job interview. She is wearing very tight, revealing clothing. You have given her your advice and her answer is that everyone dresses that way. "It's the style!", she says. **What do you do?**

Group 1

Reason with her. Ask her to tell you what she has seen of the way in which people dress when they go to work. If there is no change of mind, let her wear her chosen outfit and face the consequences.

Group 2:

Discuss the likely expectations of the interviewer and the organisation regarding suitable clothes for the workplace, and their possible reaction to her appearing at the interview in her chosen outfit. If this not influence her to change, let her learn from her mistake.

Group 3:

Discuss the appropriate dress for different situations. Take her to see how people dress in various offices. Take a spare outfit for her to change into just in case she doesn't 'see the light' until the last minute.

Group 4:

Give advice on what is appropriate for the occasion and take her to look at how people dress for work at the place where she is seeking employment. If there is resistance to the advice given, let her learn from her own experience.

Scenario #7:   Your 'mentee' tells you he is running short of cash this month and needs some help. He promises to pay you back next week. By the way, you just happened to have cashed your paycheck. **What do you do?**

Group 1

Do not give cash. Find out what is needed and buy it if it can be afforded. If it is agreed that the cost of purchase will be a loan, ensure that it is repaid on schedule.

Group 2:

Don't give any money. Share lessons concerning money management and prioritising needs *vs.* wants. If the needed item is purchased by the mentor, a repayment plan must be agreed.

Group 3:

Find out why the cash is needed. Give cash after you both agree when and how it will be paid pack. Talk about savings and budgeting.

Group 4:

Never give a mentee cash. Identify what is needed and if, for example, the need is for school books, give a cheque directly to the bookstore or school.

Presenter's Comments: Be careful of manipulation. The mentor should not become 'a crutch'. A mentor is not a financier. Once a mentor begins to give cash, there will be no end to the demands. Find a solution for the 'mentee's' problem in some way other than by personally handing out money. Also, never give expensive gifts. Beneficial token gifts, e.g., books, can be given.

In general, it is part of the mentor's role to discourage materialism and greed. Teach budgeting, money management and planning ahead.

Following completion of the group activity, the presenter stressed the importance of carrying out a needs assessment and defining goals and objectives when developing a mentoring programme.

Needs Assessment

She explained what needs assessment entailed and showed transparencies which summarised her the reasons for carrying out a needs assessment and tips for how it should be done:

Developing a Mentoring Programme

ASSESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS & RESOURCES — WHY?

➢ To make sure your programme will really benefit young people in your community

➢ To ensure that the programme is addressing a significant problem

➢ To help you get funding

➢ To assist in recruiting mentors

➢ To identify community groups with resources that could help you.

Tips on How to Assess Community Needs

➢ Identify key people in your community who work with your target age group:

- school principals
- teachers, guidance counsellors
- social service agencies
- heads of youth clubs
- church leaders

➢ Plan the questions you want to ask.

Some typical questions that could be asked during the community survey were:

> ➤ How many people are currently being served by your agency/organisation?
>
> ➤ What are their characteristics? (Include age, gender, education, income level, family composition, location, etc.)
>
> ➤ What are the most pressing problems facing the young people you serve?
>
> ➢ What are the most pressing problems facing the community you serve?
>
> ➢ What needs are not being met by current programmes?
>
> ➢ What resources are available to meet those needs?

Defining Goals and Objectives

The next task to be addressed was the definition of goals and objectives. Having collected information through the needs assessment survey, that data should be analysed to determine how the proposed mentoring programme will fit in with community needs, available resources, and the organisation's overall purpose. The main questions to be answered were:

- **What does the organisation want to accomplish? For whom?** [Who is the target population (age, gender, location, etc.)? Is it to be a school-based or out-of school programme?]

- **How will these things be accomplished?**

- **How will that work be measured to determine what has been achieved?**

The answers should be documented in a concise Mission Statement, as well as clearly stated goals and objectives. Both short- and long-term objectives should be developed. Setting short-term objectives was particularly important, as meeting them gave mentors and protégés a feeling of success early. This helped to keep enthusiasm and involvement high, reduce attrition, and give focus to the interactions. Moreover, protégés would have different needs at different times and their achievements would be made step by step.

The **Mission Statement** should be evaluated by answering these questions:

>Is it realistic?

>Is it clear and concise?

>Does it reflect the organisation's values and beliefs?

>Does it reflect the needs of those who it is planned to help?

Y.O.U.'s Mission Statement[1] was used as an example:

>Youth Opportunities Unlimited... seeks to ensure that through the mentoring relationship, every adolescent is provided with the emotional support necessary to build self-confidence and self esteem...

Goals and objectives needed to be realistic, as mentoring could not solve all problems that the target population experienced.

The difference between goals and objectives was explained through the following definitions:

GOALS: statements on which specific objectives are built. Goals will take into account
>
>– Information gleaned from the Needs Assessment
>– the philosophy of the organisation
>– the people involved
>– the available resources
>– what the Mission Statement says.

>*Example*: To give protégés the inspiration and guidance to motivate them to do well in life.

OBJECTIVES: specific, measurable activities for achieving the stated goals; that is, the who, what, when, where, how, etc., of the programme.

>*Example*: To arrange 50 appropriate mentor-protégé matches by the end of the second quarter of the year.

>### *Structuring the Programme*

In structuring the programme, staffing and resources were important considerations. Certain key questions were suggested for the staffing process:

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[1] See Y.O.U. *Mentor Handbook,* a copy of which was given to each participant, for full text of Mission Statement.

STAFFING

➢ What positions are needed?

➢ What are their job descriptions?

➢ Which positions should be filled by paid staff and which by volunteers?

➢ What credentials, education, experience are necessary for each job?

➢ What should salaries be?

➢ How will these persons be recruited?

Personnel policies and procedures would also have to be defined, so that all involved would know what was to be done, by whom, and how the parties should interact with each other. This would also entail development of the necessary administrative forms. Policies should cover such matters as:

• When and under what circumstances programme participants (both mentors and protégés would be terminated

• What to do when a mentor/protégé relationship was not working out

• How to respond to crises

• How to handle confidential information

• How to handle controversial issues that may surface (e.g., pregnancy, illegal drug use, etc.)

Suggestions were also given concerning forms that would be required for various purposes:

• Contract for protégé's participation in the programme

• Consent from parent/guardian

• Mentor application

• Protégé's personal data

• Permission for field trips, special activities

• Monitoring mentors' and protégés' programme attendance

- Programme Evaluation.

Also required was an **Action Plan** for programme implementation, with a realistic timeline for putting each stage of the programme in place and with each task assigned to a specific individual.

Identifying and Recruiting Mentors

The essence of the message to be conveyed to persons interested in becoming mentors was:

> "You don't have to have a degree or be a professional,
> but you must care about and want to work with children."

Potential mentors should be able to:

- ✓ Enjoy young people
- ✓ Separate their own goals from those of their protégés
- ✓ Ask for help when they need it
- ✓ Allow protégés to make mistakes
- ✓ Demonstrate and communicate the value of teamwork, reliability, commitment, dependability and civic responsibility
- ✓ Encourage protégés to stay in school
- ✓ Communicate the relationships between basic academic skills and success
- ✓ Reinforce protégés' successes; foster supportive relationships.

Personal qualities that the organisation should look for in potential recruits were listed as:

- ✓ patience and caring
- ✓ sensitivity to others
- ✓ flexibility
- ✓ conscientiousness
- ✓ reliability
- ✓ the ability to listen.

Productive sources for recruiting mentors had been found to be:

- alumni associations
- service clubs
- churches
- local businesses
- professional organisations
- tertiary institutions
- referrals.

It was recommended that mentor-protégé pairing be done on a same-sex basis. Other criteria that could be used to match mentors and protégés were:

- ✓ career interest
- ✓ Special skills
- ✓ Hobbies
- ✓ Religion
- ✓ Geographic proximity.

Since the organisation needed to know the sort of person each potential mentor was, it was advisable to elicit certain self-revealing information through the application form or a separate questionnaire. Useful questions were:

1. Why do you want to be a mentor?
2. What do you want to get from this relationship?
3. What are your areas of special interest?
4. What skills can you bring to the relationship with your protégé and to the programme?
5. Remembering your teenage years, what could a mentor have done that would have been helpful to you?
6. What kind of experience with adolescents have you had in the past?
7. What do you like most about teenagers?
8. What problems might you anticipate with a teen?
9. How do you think you will cope with value differences?
10. How much time can you commit to this programme?

Screening of mentor applicants **was essential** to ensure recruitment of persons who had the sensitivity, commitment and sense of responsibility needed for good mentoring. Screening was also important for eliminating persons who had the potential to harm protégés or the programme itself. The wider the recruitment base, the more rigorous the screening process should be.

Recruiting Protégés

Selection criteria and the selection method to be used for recruiting protégés should be decided early in the programme development process. Recruitment would also entail meeting parents/guardians, gathering background data and securing protégé and parental signed consent for enrolment in the programme.

Orientation sessions should be held for protégés and parents to explain:

- what *mentoring* meant

- what to expect and what not to expect

- the protégé's responsibilities

- the mentor's responsibilities

- dos and don'ts of mentoring[2]

- support services, especially in crisis situations.

It should be made clear that mentors were not surrogate parents. Instead, the organisation's help should be offered in linking 'mentees' or their parents with appropriate sources of social assistance when necessary. Other assistance given could be training and counselling to enable parents to better cope with their role (e.g.. coaching in questions that they should ask their children's teachers).

The ongoing involvement of parents/guardians in the programme should be encouraged through activities in which they were invited to participate. Meetings should be arranged for times convenient to them, and refreshment could be offered as a way of welcoming and nurturing them. Mentors should also be encouraged to develop a good relationship with their protégés' parents/caregiver(s) and siblings.

The benefits of establishing and maintaining strong links with the community were again highlighted. Networking would not only facilitate access to needed services, but would also encourage interest in, and support for, the programme. Some examples were given of the ways in which strong community links could help:

- recruiting mentors and protégés

- external training for mentors and programme staff

- speakers for parent, protégé, mentor meetings

- direct services for protégés: e.g., tutoring, counselling, health care, crisis intervention (e.g., hotlines)

- activities for participants (museum visits, etc.)

- specialised advice related to setting up/evaluating the programme.

Fitness Break

When the workshop resumed after lunch, Mrs. Blaine led participants in a re-energising exercise that required them to stand, push their chairs back and, with vigorous body movements, sing the words:

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[2] See *Y.O.U. Mentor Handbook*, pp.8-9.

I'm alert, alive, awake and animated,
I'm alert, alive, awake and animated,
I'm alert, alive, awake
I'm awake, alive, alert
I'm alert, alive, awake and animated

several times to the tune of "If you are happy and you know it, clap your hands".

This was followed by the presenter's brief review of the planning and implementation steps outlined earlier, before coverage of the requirements for mentor training to which passing reference had been made earlier.

4.   Guidelines for Training Mentors

Planning and Designing the Mentor Orientation Programme

Attendance at an initial orientation session should be mandatory for all new mentors, to give them some training and support before they were had the first meeting with their protégés. In preparation for the orientation session, checks should be made to ensure that the relevant application forms were received and processed (including the receipt of satisfactory responses to reference checks). Notices should be sent out to the participants with adequate lead time.

The content should at least cover the following topics:

ORIENTATION SESSION FOR MENTORS — SUGGESTED TOPICS

1.   What is Mentoring?

2.   Goals and Objectives of the Mentoring Programme

3.   The Role of the Mentor — Dos and Don'ts

4.   Proteges' Overall Background and Issues
     - Developmental characteristics of the age group
     - Issues facing today's youth: drugs, sex, violence, etc.
     - How background and issues might affect the mentor/protégé relationship.

5.   Effective Communication (especially Listening skills)

6.   Expectations

7.   Asking for help.

Ongoing training and discussion sessions for mentors were important because they provided critical information; sharpened skills; facilitated mentor retention; allowed for interaction between staff and mentors while they shared views and ideas. Periodic evaluation sessions were especially useful because they provided opportunities for mentors to not only provide feedback on their experience, but also to express opinions and suggest problem solutions. These sessions provides a means of identifying critical areas where the organisation's "message" might not have been conveyed effectively. Formal evaluation sessions also highlight to mentors and staff the importance placed on performance analysis.

Sessions could also be arranged to bring mentors and proteges together, so camaraderie and networking could be fostered. These sessions could take the form of discussion of specific subjects or a general rap session, under the guidance of a Facilitator.

Mrs. Blaine mentioned Y.O.U.'s system for formally certifying mentors who had undergone additional training through four additional workshops, and made consistent contributions to the Mentoring Programme[3]. Certificate presentation ceremonies were held on an annual basis. External experts were used to make presentations at the follow-up workshops on topics such as:

- ✓ Understanding the Adolescent
- ✓ Values and Attitudes and the Adolescent
- ✓ Adolescent Health and Well-being
- ✓ Assisting the Adolescent with Career Guidance
- ✓ How Come I Didn't See It? Warning Signs from Adolescents in Trouble.

Role Play

Volunteer participants performed two skits that they had quickly prepared. The purpose of the role play was to ensure that certain information conveyed, about interviewing prospective mentors and explaining what mentoring meant, had been processed correctly.

In the first skit, Richard Rowe and Kevin Collins, both from ASHÉ, performed the roles of NGO Director and prospective mentor, respectively, in an interview setting. From this it emerged that a mentor should not try to change the protégé, but to get him/her to look at things from different perspectives.

The action in the second skit depicted a situation in which a girl, who was already a 'mentee', tried to influence her friend to become involved in the same mentoring programme. The potential recruit went to tell her mother what her friend had said about the programme, and indicated that one of the mentors would be coming to give her mother a fuller explanation. The mentor visited the home and persuaded the mother to allow her daughter to enter the mentoring programme. This result was partially influenced by the mother's good opinion of the friend who had told her

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[3] There are two levels of certification, and the criteria for each level are described in the *Y.O.U. Mentor Handbook*, p. 12.

daughter about the programme. Volunteer participants were:

Mildred Dean	(YWCA National)	ℜ	*Mentee*
Camille Taylor	(Children First)	ℜ	*Prospective mentee*
Sheila Nicholson	(Y.O.U.)	ℜ	*Mother*
Daphne Samuels	(Ja. Red Cross)	ℜ	*Mentor*.

5. Monitoring and Evaluating the Programme

In God we trust,
All others must bring data.
         − W. Edwards Deming

The presenter again stressed the necessity of regularly evaluating how well the mentoring programme was working. Evaluation information would be useful for identifying and correcting problems quickly, publicising the programme, motivating staff and volunteers and soliciting funding. Both the process and the outcomes should be evaluated to produce an objective assessment of whether the programme was meeting the pre-determined goals and objectives.

Process Evaluation

Data-gathering for evaluation of the mentoring process could focus on:

- number of mentors recruited

- number of proteges enrolled and matched

- how long they have been in the programme

- frequency of weekly/monthly contacts[4]

- the activities that were provided for proteges, mentors, and for both categories together.

Outcome Evaluation

Evaluation outcomes should produce answers to questions, such as:

- Did mentors and 'mentees' meet their separate programme goals?

- Are 'mentees' different in some measurable way after a period of exposure to the programme?
  [This would require collection of baseline data on entry to the programme for comparison with subsequent assessments.]

- Are 'mentees' different because of their exposure to the programme?

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[4] See "Mentor Log" in *Y.O.U. Handbook* (p. 19).

The following instruments or strategies could be used to gather data for evaluating outcomes:

- Questionnaires

- Mentors' ratings

- Teacher ratings (before and after entry to the programme)

- Parent ratings

- Focus groups.

6.   Sustaining the Programme

Mrs. Blaine said that, if mentoring programmes were to be vibrant and long-lasting, organisers had to take steps to keep participants motivated and the public supportive of the work being done. This would involve efforts to retain mentor interest, build satisfying mentor-protégé relations through goal-related activities, and mount an effective public education/public relations programme.

Retaining Mentor Interest

Some useful techniques for retaining mentor interest were listed:

- Constant communication:
  — telephone
  — bulletins/newsletters

- Highlighting mentors' contributions in the media
  [Make maximum use of free media space, e.g., *The Gleaner* has a volunteers page; many radio/TV hosts are anxious to interview people about interesting community projects.]

- Involve mentors in other organisational activities as guest speakers, discussion facilitators, etc.

- Host Mentor Appreciation Days, and invite mentors to other social events so that they can feel a part of 'the family'.

- Present awards, certificates, give-aways (e.g., mugs, T-shirts, bookmarks)

- Conduct Personal Development Workshops
  [Look beyond normal mentor training to topics which will benefit the mentors in their personal lives, e.g., *Stress Management*.]

- Facilitate the establishment of a Mentor Support Group so that mentors can network with each other for mutual support

Building Relations Through Goal-Related Activities

Mentor and protégé should sit down together and agree on the personal and educational short- and long-term goals that the 'mentee' wants to achieve[5]. Other suggested activities that mentor and protégé could undertake together were:

1. Visits to tertiary institutions
2. Fields trips to specific sites
3. Visit to mentor's workplace
4. Attendance at school events
5. Learning a new skill or sports activity
6. Having dinner in the mentor's home
7. Talking about important experiences in their lives
8. Talking with adult(s) in protégé's career interest area
9. Visiting the protégé's school teacher
10. Showing an area of the mentor's special interest/skill
11. Undertaking a community service project (senior citizens, hospital, environmental project, etc.)

Public Education/Public Relations

Participants were encouraged to devote time and effort to the critical areas of public education and public relations for the following reasons:

- To educate the public on the mentoring programme and adolescent issues

- To keep donors, mentors and supporters (current and potential) abreast of what was being done

- To engage in advocacy on behalf of the target population served.

Getting the word out was essential. Possible strategies were bulletins, newsletters, media programmes, news releases (take photographs of all activities; sometimes a captioned photograph had a better chance of publication than a long text document), radio & TV interviews (don't wait to be invited – offer to appear); brochures, annual reports and special publications.

Reference was made to the consultancy services that Y.O.U. offers, for a small fee, to organisations wishing to establish mentoring programmes. Questions on the overall presentation were then invited from the audience.

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[5] See "Goal Setting Tool" in *Y.O.U. Mentor Handbook* (p. 20).

In summary, participants' questions and the presenter's answers were as follows:

Q. **I have heard about Y.O.U.'s summer workshop. Is it just for crafts or part of the protégé support programme?**

A. *It is one of several activities (e.g., the homework programme) in support of the mentoring programme. At the summer workshop, participants also discuss topics not dealt with in their schools, go on field trips, etc.*

Q. **What if a 'mentee' becomes overly dependent emotionally on the mentor — that is, too clinging?**

A.. *The mentor must ask for advice if the relationship becomes 'sticky'. The situation could be discussed with the project officer and the mentor support group. Expert help might be needed to wean the young person with hurting him/her.*

Q. **Do you have many schools calling for help in setting up mentoring programmes?**

A. *Every day. Y.O.U. staff are also willing to give talks about good study habits and motivational talks to build self-esteem.*

Q. **What is done if there is no caregiver?**

A. *The situation has not arisen at Y.O.U. because it is a programme for in-school but at-risk youth. The only experience that might relate was when a 'mentee's' father moved away and left the child on his own in the yard. The mentor arranged for him to live with a retiree.*

Q. **The *Y.O.U. Mentor Handbook* recommends that a mentee not be taken to the mentor's home in the early stages of the relationship. Where would they meet?**

A. *They could meet at such venues as the library, the mentor's office, shopping mall, other places of interest, and at the protégé's school or home.*

The presenter gave additional advice about the importance of trust in the mentor-'mentee' relationship, particularly if the 'mentee' was to feel comfortable in sharing information on sensitive issues – e.g., Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), pregnancy, emotions. She gave information about a newly established Youth Clinic at Maxfield Avenue, Kingston, where young people did not need parental consent to get assistance and also referred participants to pages 21-22 of the *Y.O.U. Mentor Handbook* where a "Directory of Support Services for Crisis Situations" could be found.

7.   Summary and Closure

Finally, Mrs. Blaine summarised the main points of the day's presentation and drew participants' attention to certain pages of the *Y.O.U. Mentor Handbook* which she suggested they might find especially helpful:

Mrs. Daphne Samuels thanked Mrs Blaine, on behalf of the participants, for an informative presentation and her comments were endorsed by Mrs. Cooper.

Mrs. Blaine thanked participants for the interest they had shown and wished success for those who would be establishing mentoring programmes. She also expressed appreciation to Development Associates and USAID for making the workshop possible and enabling her to come to share her mentoring experience.

The workshop then adjourned until the following day.

Welcome and Introductions

Mrs. Cooper welcomed participants and introduced Mrs. Hope McNish, the presenter for the Peer Counselling sessions scheduled for that day and the next.

ORGANISING A PEER COUNSELLING PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH

First, Mrs. McNish reviewed the peer counselling training objectives[6] and said that her sessions would be very interactive and activity-based.

Activity #1

As a start, participants were asked to individually state their names, their organisations, what they hoped to gain from the sessions and how they planned to apply that knowledge in their organisations. Responses ranged from "to learn everything about peer counselling", and "to learn how to identify children with problems", to "hope to see if there are new approaches which would enhance what is already being done".

The presenter reminded participants that it was not the workshop's objective to train them to be peer counsellors but to show them how to organise peer counselling programmes.

Activity #2

Next, participants were given a few minutes to carry out the following task:

> Get up and stand away from the table. Take 3 rice grains from the bottle and pass the bottle on to the next person. Walk around and talk to each other. In responding to questions that are asked of you, DO NOT reply with "No", "Yes", a nod or any other body language. If you give a forbidden reply, forfeit a rice grain to your questioner.

After "time-up" was called, it was ascertained that one person had 9 grains, another had 5, a third had 4, and all other persons had between 3 and none. In the analysis of what had taken place, the presenter led participants to see that asking closed questions (e.g., "Are you happy?") elicited "Yes" and "No" answers, while open-ended questions (that is, questions beginning with why, what, how, where, etc. — e.g., "How are you feeling?") evoked fuller responses. It was important to remember that fact in counselling interactions.

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[6] In addition to the overall training objectives mention in the Introduction to this report, specific objectives had been prepared for each day's sessions. These objectives have been attached hereto as *Appendix III.*

She also made the point that an activity, such as the one in which they had just been engaged, was useful as an 'ice breaker' at the start of any group session they conducted. It served to increase participants' comfort level and stimulated their ongoing wholehearted involvement.

Using transparencies (participants received print copies) to support her comments, Mrs. McNish led a discussion on what peer counselling was, some problems faced by today's youth and some important aspects of developing a peer counselling programme for at-risk youth.

1.   Introduction to Peer Counselling

Definition of Terms

PEER GROUP: people who share a common identity or experience, e.g., age, gender, race, ethnicity, career, health problem, etc.

- The term commonly refers to age groups in general, particularly adolescents bound closely together by youth culture.

COUNSELLING: a non-directive, non-judgemental form of assistance in dealing with personal issues.

- Effective counselling helps an individual to talk about, explore and understand his/her situation and work out a game plan. It also encourages the person to take charge of the situation and decide on his or her own solutions to problems.

AT-RISK YOUTH: youth who exhibit problematic behaviour, or are in situations which may make them prone to negative behaviour, such as:
  — dropping out of school
  — poor performance in school
  — involvement in crime and violence
  — substance abuse
  — teen pregnancy
  — risky sexual behaviour

EMPATHY: feeling and expressing understanding of the experience of another person (a reflective process).

In the discussion of the foregoing definitions, Mrs. McNish highlighted the following:
- Counselling was an empowering process to get the 'client' to arrive at his/her own understanding of the problems faced and the best solutions for him/her. The counsellor's

role was to guide and assist clients to make up their own minds, and not to pronounce moral judgement and tell them what to do.

- Empathy differed from sympathy – the former meant understanding the person's circumstances and emotions, while the latter offered only pity.

Issues and Problems faced by Today's Youth

Activity #3

Participants were formed into 4 working groups and given the following assignment:

Using the list displayed *[See reproduction of the list below]*, identify 5 problems that are most critical in relation to the youth with whom you work. Add any other significant problem not listed and report back to a plenary session.

SOME PROBLEMS FACED BY TODAY'S YOUTH

- ✓ Bombardment with distractions
- ✓ Child Labour
- ✓ Child pornography
- ✓ Crime and violence

- ✓ Dysfunctional & destructive home lives
- ✓ Homelessness
- ✓ Identity crisis
- ✓ Lack of parental guidance
- ✓ Lack of refusal skills
- ✓ Lack of self-esteem and self-understanding
- ✓ Morality confusion
- ✓ Negative peer pressure
- ✓ Poor schooling
- ✓ Poverty
- ✓ Sexual abuse

- ✓ Anger management
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Conflict management
- ✓ Contradiction between social ideals and social reality
- ✓ Coping with stress

- ✓ Dealing with grief and trauma
- ✓ Generation gap
- ✓ Goal-setting
- ✓ Handling relationships
- ✓ Media images

- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Premature adult responsibilities
- ✓ Rebellion
- ✓ Risky sexual behaviour
- ✓ Suicide

The groups reported as follows:

Group 1

1. Poverty→Child Labour→Premature Adult Responsibilities
2. Lack of parental guidance
3. Crime and violence
4. Negative peer pressure
5. Substance abuse
6. Child abuse.

Group 2

1. Poverty
2. Low self esteem & self-understanding
3. Homelessness
4. Child labour
5. Negative peer pressure
6. Anger management
7. Lack of parental guidance.

Group 3

1. Lack of parental guidance/dysfunctional home life
2. Negative peer pressure
3. Premature adult responsibilities
4. Lack of self-esteem and self-understanding/lack of goal-setting
5. Teenage pregnancy
6. Poverty.

Group 4

1. Poverty
2. Crime and violence
3. Conflict/Anger management
4. Lack of parental guidance
5. Low self-esteem & self-understanding
6. Physical, emotional/mental abuse from adults inside and outside the home (especially towards disabled children, and in schools)
7. Poor communication skills.

Mrs. McNish remarked on the convergence of concerns/issues, and added that some young persons even invited negative adult attention without realising the nature of the abuse. She said everyone should be concerned about these issues, because they negatively affected the development of a significant proportion of the country's youth and, consequently, their ability to function as contributing, positive citizens.

Some participants commented that, in their experience, many school guidance counsellors were ineffective because they were unable to bridge the generation/culture/social gap between themselves and the at-risk youth they served. Several had also lost the trust of their clients because they often gossiped about confidential information shared with them. Other participants pointed out that school counsellors were under a lot of pressure because of the large number of students and the multiplicity of problems with which they must deal single-handedly. Trained peer counsellors could take some of the pressure off guidance counsellors. It was also suggested that more public education about the problem issues could help to reduce the workload of school counsellors.

Both the presenter and Mrs. Cooper affirmed that guidance counsellors needed all the support and assistance they could get, and explained that mentoring and peer counselling programmes would be beneficial in that regard. Many different types of supportive intervention were needed

to buffer youth who found themselves in problem situations. It was important to create positive experiences for them so that they could be motivated to develop a positive vision of themselves in the future.

Issues Teens are More Comfortable Discussing With Their Peers

<u>Activity #4</u>

Just before the coffee break, the presenter gave instructions for another group activity, which participants would work on after they re-convened:

1. Reflect on your teenage years.

2. Share with your group one situation in which a peer

    a) helped you to make a correct decision

    b) got you into trouble.

3. Make a list of things/topics you felt more comfortable discussing with your peers than with adults.

After spending the allocated time on this activity, the groups were asked to report on Item 3 of the assignment. The topics identified by each group were generally the same and related to:

- sex/relationships
- menstruation
- partying
- fashion/makeup
- religion/moral values
- problems associated with home and family.

Conclusions reached in the subsequent discussion were that:

- fear, and sometimes perceptions that they will be unable to express themselves appropriately, often inhibit teenagers from discussing some sensitive topics with adults
- many adults are uncomfortable discussing sexual issues in realistic terms
- teenagers are put off by the rigid, narrow-minded views of some adults
- teenagers tend to turn to their peers to discuss critical issues which influence value formation and future character. Some may transmit negative values based on their own dysfunctional value systems.

Mrs. McNish summarised by saying that peers played a vital role in our understanding of the world. Rather than allowing the inevitable process to occur haphazardly, a more scientific approach could be taken to get desirable results. Through a peer counselling programme, a sample of the peer group could be equipped with accurate information and shown how to disseminate it in a non-directive, non-judgemental manner among their peers. They would understand exactly what

their peers were going through, would be better able to relate to them in an informal manner using their common 'language', and would meet with less resistance.

At this stage, the presenter also reviewed what had been covered up to that point; namely:

- definition of some key terms
- identification of some of the critical problems faced by youth
- the reality that young people needed other types of support, outside of that provided by parents, teachers and guidance counsellors, to help them cope with the difficult issues they faced.

Benefits and Pitfalls of Peer Counselling

A summary list of the benefits of peer counselling was displayed and reviewed:

- Youth are natural experts on issues affecting youth
- Youth relate more comfortably to one or more of their peers on an informal level, as opposed to formal counselling from a non-peer
- Promotes positive peer relationships
- Meets less resistance from teens
- Builds self-esteem in youth
- Leads to reduction in negative social behaviour and better performance in school
- Enables youth to effectively deal with problems that affect them, e.g. family conflict, terminal illness, parents' unemployment, divorce/separation, death and school failure — youth, especially boys, turn to their friends for support in times of crisis
- Peer counsellors may be role models of effective communication styles and approaches
- Helps to motivate youth to participate in educational and developmental programmes.
- Peer counsellors play a key role in disseminating information and rallying youth support on issues.
- Research shows that children's relationships with their friends support co-operation and reciprocity, and effective conflict management.

Attention was then drawn to the following pitfalls that should be avoided when organising peer counselling programmes:

- Poor selection of peer counsellors
- Lack of/inadequate training
- Lack of/inadequate monitoring and supervision
- Lack of support from the community and school
- Boring activities.

Other points emphasised were:

- Programme leadership and supervision should be by trained adults who model peer counselling skills and desirable behaviour. If it was a school-based programme, the guidance counsellor should be the programme co-ordinator/facilitator.

- Although counsellors were trained not born, it was important to choose persons with the personal attributes that would make them trainable and suitable for the role.

- Structure the training programme using interactive and experiential methods, with coaching and feedback, role-playing and practical assignments.

- Communication skills training was a critical part of the training to equip peer counsellors for carrying out their role;

- Training should be an ongoing process, since the initial training must be reinforced from time to time and emerging issues addressed.

- Regular feedback should be obtained to know what was happening and what programme changes might be needed;

- Obtain the advance support of teachers, administrators, parents and other students in a school-based setting, and the support of relevant groups, individuals (even perhaps area 'dons') and caregivers in a community-based setting[7].

- Call on qualified resource persons in the community to assist with training;

- Activities should be varied, creative and dynamic to retain youth interest. For example, include youth forums to explore new ideas, discuss issues and solve problems; build fun into the programme with workshops, games, music, mass media, discussions or story-telling.

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[7] Information was also given about the Peer Counsellors Association of Jamaica, a community group of youth leaders.

- Peer counselling was NOT:
  - ☒ advice-giving
  - ☒ practical assistance
  - ☒ nursing
  - ☒ sympathising.

Peer counselling ought to be an empowering experience that created opportunities for people to express and examine their own points of view.

2. Implementation Steps

The presenter advised that the objectives of the host organisation would influence the programme's objectives, and the latter should be defined and put in writing. Similarly, roles would have to be clearly defined and a budget prepared. Adequate financial resources must be allocated to initiate and maintain the programme. Peer counsellors should be involved in the planning process. Regular monitoring and evaluation were important also, and some strategies recommended were surveys, interviews, focus groups, group and one-on-one meetings, and feedback.

The implementation guidelines were summarised in a list as follows:

1. Outline Objectives and prepare Action Plan, including ethical standards, budget, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

2. Brief interest groups and get their input and support.

3. Identify funding and material resources (stationery, venue for meetings and training, etc.)

4. Select and train the Programme Co-ordinator.

5. Select and train Peer Counsellors.

6. Facilitate planning session with Peer Counsellors and Programme Co-ordinator.

7. Launch the programme with a rap session involving the Peer Counsellors as facilitators.

8. Have regular group and one-on-one debriefing meetings between the Co-ordinator and Peer Counsellors.

9. Evaluate continuously using the results to improve the programme and identify topics for rap sessions and discussion forums.

Criteria for Selecting Peer Counsellors

<u>Activity #5</u>

Participants were directed to re-arrange themselves into their previous working groups to discuss and prepare group responses to the following question:

What are some of the attributes that we should look for in selecting persons to be trained as peer counsellors?

When combined, the group responses indicated the following desirable attributes:

- doing fairly well in school
- flexible
- friendly
- good leadership skills
- good listening skills
- good values
- mature outlook and behaviour
- positive attitude
- self-assured but not egotistic
- self-confident
- trustworthy/confidential

Mrs. McNish then offered her own list of selection criteria for comparison:

- **MUST HAVE:**
  - ✓ good communication/listening skills
  - ✓ good moral standards
  - ✓ good performance in school
  - ✓ good social skills
  - ✓ humility
  - ✓ leadership capacity
  - ✓ positive peer and adult interactions
  - ✓ positive sense of self
  - ✓ problem-solving skills
  - ✓ resilience in the face of difficult circumstances
  - ✓ self & social awareness
  - ✓ self-control
  - ✓ sense of humour
  - ✓ tact
  - ✓ track record of co-operation

- **MUST BE:**
  - ✓ Confidential
  - ✓ empathetic
  - ✓ sincere
  - ✓ trustworthy

- **MUST BE** representative of the social composition of the community/group in which they will be working, in terms of:
  - ✓ race
  - ✓ age group
  - ✓ socio-economic background.

Where to find Potential Peer Counsellors

Suggested sources from which peer counsellors could be recruited were:

- Schools
- Churches
- Youth Clubs
- Boys Scouts
- Girl Guides
- Youth Service Clubs, e.g., Key Club
- Youths trained in Peer Counselling by other organisations, such as the National Council on Drug Abuse, National Family Planning Board, Jamaica AIDS Support

The Role of the Programme Co-ordinator

It was also explained that the co-ordinator or the co-ordinating agency would have to:

- provide on-going supervision and facilitate continuing learning opportunities for both peer counsellors and other members of the peer group
- maintain a close relationship with peer counsellors that allows for monitoring, dealing with confidentiality, and making referrals to professionals.

The Role of Parents and Teachers

It was also necessary to involve parents and teachers in the programme, not only to maintain their interest and support but also because their feedback would be needed as part of the essential evaluation process. After appropriate explanations of what the programme aimed to achieve and what help was required from them, they should be asked to:

- maintain communication with the Co-ordinator
- monitor observance of ethical standards and behavioural guidelines
- track the effect of the programme on children-students
- Assert their own roles as parents and teachers.

Type of Training Needed to Acquire Peer Counselling Skills

The presenter cautioned participants that training persons to be effective peer counsellors would require a much longer period of time than two days. In addition to accessing local expertise, there were extensive resources available through the Internet that could help with training programme design and content.

She said that peer counsellors were expected to:

- create a sense of acceptance, non-defensiveness and freedom to talk
- facilitate self-understanding and self-examination by drawing on their own experiences
- share personal experiences where relevant
- be non-judgemental.

Apart from a clear understanding of the values and facts to be imparted (i.e., what to say and what not to say), they would have to receive training in the special skills they would need to perform their role:

Listening — active and reflective (*making eye contact, leaning forward, open posture, relaxed body, facing the person*)

Verifying perceptions/reflections

Giving feedback

Focus

Facilitation

Information-giving: how to deliver information in a way that a listener would be receptive.

Conversation: how to initiate, win confidence, and guide to elicit the desired responses through effective listening, paraphrasing, clarifying, summarising, reflecting questions, open-ended questions, point blank questions, self-disclosing. [*The last technique listed requires the ability to judge when it might be of value to share relevant personal experiences.*]

Questioning: how to express questions to get maximum feedback

Reflection and Managing Group Dynamics

Anger/Conflict Management: how to defuse anger and mediate disputes ("settle underlying personal issues first").

Above all, it was important for peer counsellors to be able to avoid dominating the process, share information and give appropriate support. A useful tip given for counselling a grief-stricken person was to resist the temptation to make statements such as "Hush, never mind", or "I know what you are going through". Often keeping silent while the person wept or saying instead: "I can imagine what you are feeling", could be more supportive.

A handout on anger management *(Appendix IV)* was distributed by Mrs. McNish, who suggested that the exercises on the sheet could be used by participants when they conducted their own anger

management workshops. Participants were also asked to read the handout overnight in preparation for an activity on the next day.

3. Input from Grace Foundation Peer Counselling Programme Staff

After lunch, the workshop was joined by a team of visitors who shared information on the peer counselling programme run by the Grace & Staff Community Development Foundation for at-risk youth living in the downtown Kingston Southside community and its environs. The visitors were Mrs. Jackie Jones, manager of the Foundation; Mr. Curtis Sweeney, programme co-ordinator; and 18-year old Mr. Heancie Allen, peer counsellor and resident of the Southside community.

Of special interest, was young Mr. Allen's spirited explanation of his role, counselling methods and positive outlook on life. Among others things, he said that, to be effective, peer counsellors "must have a passion [for carrying out the role], patience, and be consistent in their own behaviour". One had to have a special gift to deal with children as it was not easy – but it was important not to get angry. He was finding the experience to be challenging and rewarding. It had led to his positive outlook and caused him to love his peers with whom he now had a special bond.

The adults gave a brief history of the Foundation, outlined the background to their peer counselling programme, explained how it functioned, and described some of the main activities. They had found that self-esteem building was the key to helping their participants to become future oriented and to think beyond their present circumstances. In their view, peer counselling complemented other aspects of the process of transmitting certain values and social skills to counteract the prevalent feelings of apathy and hopelessness. The adolescents were struggling for a sense of identity and self and the peer group often became more important than the family at that stage of development. Peer counselling programmes could, therefore, have a major positive impact.

Among the questions participants asked were:

1. *How would you deal with someone who always wants money?"*

Answer: The difference between *wants* and *needs* would be explained. Then the situation would be investigated to find out why a begging pattern was emerging. Sometimes there was a real need, and effort would be made to find a solution (e.g., through their co-operative feeding programme). Sometimes, however, it was the parent(s) sending the children out to beg, or because the child was in the grip of the prevailing 'name brand mania' and wanted to acquire some unnecessary and expensive item. However, the experience had been that when children became involved in the programme, they eventually broke out of the begging habit.

2. **How would you deal with 'building up' a child who has no parental involvement?**

Answer: Through the parent support group, other parents would take on the parenting role, because they had been trained to realise that good parenting made a positive difference. If there was a parent, but not a good one, the support group would intervene with the parent or partially assume the parenting role.

3. **How do you keep peer counsellors motivated?**

Answer: Through incentives, e.g., 2-week summer study camp, financial awards for work or study purposes; being selected first for outings, scholarships for continuing education.

4. **Do you have children in your programme who are involved with drugs?**

Answer: Not many. The experience has been that whenever there was evidence of drug use, it was usually symptomatic of some other basic problem, or the influence of another user – someone in the home or a close friend. The approach taken was for peer counsellors to lead them to a realisation of the consequences of drug abuse and to recognise the need for changed behaviour. An effort would also be made to try to understand where their need for using drugs was coming, and to arrange professional intervention to help them to phase out the drug use.

5. **Do you include students from outside the Southside area?**

Answer: Yes and we also help to subsidise the development of similar programmes elsewhere.

Mr. Richard Rowe (ASHÉ) thanked the Grace team on behalf of the participants for their enlightening and useful input.

4. Group Assignment: Developing a Peer Counselling Programme

Activity #6

For the next half hour, participants worked in their usual groups to prepare the following assignment:

Outline a plan to implement a peer counselling programme in your organisation. Include:

— objectives
— strategies for recruiting peer counsellors
— list of the training content
— how it will be managed
— resources needed
— evaluation process
— activity schedule.

The subsequent presentations indicated that everybody understood and could use the programme development guidelines imparted by the presenter. The groups were commended by Mrs. McNish for their good work and told that they would engage in role play on the next day to reinforce what they had learnt.

<div style="border:1px solid black; display:inline-block; padding:8px;">

DAY 3

</div>

Mrs. Cooper welcomed everyone and, before handing over to Mrs. McNish, told participants that evaluation forms would be distributed later for them to complete before leaving.

Mrs. McNish commented that the previous day had been "investment day" during which participants had devoted time to acquiring a great deal of information. On the present day they would be discussing, internalising and practising what they had learnt.

1.   Content Review

The highlights of the previous day's presentations were briefly reviewed, e.g., the benefits of peer counselling, selection criteria, implementation steps and evaluation strategies.
In response to a question, she pointed out that, if possible, peer counsellors should be chosen from the same organisation in which they would be working. If it was necessary to use external counsellors initially, they should meet the age group and other selection criteria already discussed.

She also mentioned that the Ministry of Health offered peer counselling training from time to time. Some other sources of training and support services were listed:

YWCA	YMCA
National Council on Drug Abuse	National Family Planning Board
Scout Association of Jamaica	Girl Guides Association of Jamaica.

Participants were then told that they would begin development of some working documents through a series of group exercises.

2.   Group Assignment I (Presentations and Role Play)

Each group was assigned a different but similar task:

Group 1:
1. Develop a questionnaire to be used as a guide in recruiting and interviewing peer counsellors.
2. Present the questionnaire to the full group.
3. Role-play an interview with a potential peer counsellor using the form.

Group 2:

1. Develop a mini-handbook for training peer counsellors. Include ethical guidelines.
2. Present the handbook to the full group.
3. Role-play a training 'sessionette' based on a section of the handbook.

Group 3:

1. Develop a report form for peer counsellors.
2. Present the form to the full group.
3. Role-play a meeting with a group of peer counsellors using elements of the form as agenda items.

Group 4:

1. Develop a list of guidelines for conflict resolution to be applied by peer counsellors.
2. Present the guidelines to the full group.
3. Role-play a situation in which a peer counsellor uses the guidelines to mediate a conflict.

Other instructions were that total preparation and presentation time allowed was 75 minutes; role play should not exceed 7 minutes; and, to save time, each group should from the outset write the content of their oral presentations (Item 2) on the sheets of flip chart paper they had been given.

Group 1 carried out their role-play before presenting their questionnaire form, reproduced on the next page, and explaining how it would be used as a recruitment tool.

In the post-presentation discussion, it was suggested that, since the focus was on youth peer counselling, seeking information about marital status seemed unnecessary. Another suggestion was that the prospective recruit could also be asked "What do you think you would be able to offer in the peer counselling programme?".

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROSPECTIVE PEER COUNSELLORS

SECTION 1

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: ____/___/_____ Present Age: _____

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Marital Status: Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated ☐

# of children: _____

SECTION 2

Which school do you attend?_____ What grade are you presently in? _____

(If not attending school) Why are you not attending school? Graduated ☐ Dropped out ☐
Other reason *(please specify)*: _____
If you graduated, what year? _____ If you dropped out, at what stage did you do so and why? _____
_____
Which extra-curricular activities and hobbies are you involved in? _____
_____

SECTION 3

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself in the following?

Listening skills	_____	Self-esteem	_____
Communication skills	_____	Flexibility	_____
Empathy	_____	Non-judgemental	_____
Confidentiality	_____	Willingness	_____
Trustworthiness	_____	Honesty	_____
Ability to accept	_____	Ability to learn	_____
Criiticism			

Please list the names and address of 2 references:

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Group 2 presented their version of a peer counselling mini-handbook prepared for use as a <u>training tool</u>:

PEER COUNSELLING HANDBOOK

WHAT IS PEER COUNSELLING?
People who share a common identity/experience, particularly adolescents who encourage others in their age group to take charge of their life situations and decide their own solutions to problems.

WHY PEER COUNSELLING?
To help teens cope with their emotional/social needs, e.g., handling relationships, communicating with others.

BENEFITS OF PEER COUNSELLING:
- Builds self-esteem
- Improves performance in school
- Leads to reduction in negative social behaviour

PROBLEMS PEER COUNSELLORS SHOULD EXPECT TO DEAL WITH:
- Child labour
- Coping with puberty
- Poverty
- Premature adult responsibilities
- Sexual abuse
- Suicidal feelings
- Teenage pregnancy/STIs

SELECTION CRITERIA:
- Passion for counselling
- Positive values and attitudes
- Great level of confidentiality
- Maturity
- Empathy
- Good social skills

THE DON'TS OF PEER COUNSELLING:
- Advice-giving
- Implement solutions (the 'counsellee' should do what he/she decides should be done)
- 'Nursing'
- Sympathising.

In their role play, a peer counsellor was shown handling a situation in which an adolescent was not doing well in her schoolwork and was depressed, sleeping in class, etc.   The counsellor tried to use the techniques in which she had been trained to perform her role. Through questioning, the counsellor discovered that, due to the necessity of working before and after school, the girl had no time to study. The counsellor offered help that the girl accepted.

As a result of something that was said, Mrs. McNish reminded participants that peer counsellors should not assume the financial responsibility of the peers being counselled. Instead, the individual, if willing could be referred to the programme co-ordinator, who would know how to facilitate access to financial or other types of assistance.

Group 3 combined the presentation of a peer counselling report form (<u>See</u> pg. 42) with their role play. The form would provide data for **programme evaluation**. Questions asked of the Group 3 presenter were:

1. "Why does *Place* have to be entered?"
2. "How would the form be used if the counselling interaction was through a group rap session?"
3. "If no names were entered on the forms, how would the records be linked if there was continuing contact with the same person?"

His answers, assisted by Mrs. McNish to some extent, were:

1. Information on *place* would indicate where peers preferred to meet for counselling.
2. A separate form would have to be developed for recording information about group sessions.
3. Excluding the contact's name helped to safeguard confidentiality. Each 'client' would be assigned a reference number and that reference number would be entered on the report form completed whenever there was a counselling contact with him/her.

Group 4 presented the following guidelines for Conflict Resolution interactions:

CONFLICT RESOLUTION GUIDELINES

- Set ground roles for the process (one person to speak at a time, etc.).

- Define the problem.

- Determine the cause of the problem through use of interviewing/listening skills.

- Based on information obtained, list possible solutions (both parties).

- Choose best solution that will provide a 'win-win' situation.

- Monitor the progress they make with implementing the mutually agreed solution.

After their role play and questioning by Mrs. McNish, it was agreed that the mediator should not operate like a judge to decide who was right or wrong; and both parties should be involved in selecting the best solution. For example, the counsellor could ask each person: "What would make you happy?", so as to guide them to consider and decide on what would satisfy them both.

PEER COUNSELLING REPORT FORM

Date: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____

Address: _____

Sex of Counsellee: Male ☐ Female ☐ Age: _____

ISSUE OF CONCERN:

☐ STI/HIV ☐ Goal-setting ☐ Separated ☐ Low self-esteem

☐ Relationship ☐ Time Management ☐ Careers ☐ Communication

☐ Male/Female reproduction ☐ Decision-making ☐ Rape ☐ Incest

☐ Contraception ☐ Substance Abuse ☐ Grieving ☐ Suicide

☐ Teenage Pregnancy ☐ Money/Resources

☐ Sexuality ☐ Other _____

Action Taken:

☐ Counsel ☐ Referred to _____

SUMMARY OF SESSION: _____

_____

_____

_____

Counsellor's Signature: _____

3. Group Assignment II (Role Play: Group Peer Counselling Session)

For the second and final task of the morning, each of the four groups was given the same instructions:

Pretending you are a group of peer counsellors, select a topic and plan a rap session with teenagers. Conduct the rap session using members of the other 3 groups as your teenage audience. Communicate beforehand with the other groups to ensure that each group selects a different topic.

Preparation for the required presentations engaged group members' attention immediately before and after the coffee break.

At presentation time, Group I chose to start off their rap session with role-play depicting how to/how not to conduct oneself at a job interview. This showed the importance of good manners, appropriate dress and attitude and lively discussion.

The Group 2 'peer counsellor' led a discussion on contraception after a panel of 'experts', each assuming the identity of a form of contraception (rhythm method, vasectomy, abstinence, condom) had given relevant information.

Group 3's presentation took the form of a panel of homeless young people, who had to hustle for a living on the streets, sharing their stories of hardship and answering questions on what had led to their present situation, etc. They also advised their audience against making the same mistakes. Consensus emerged from the discussion that existing children's homes did not provide structured activity programmes or the loving care that children needed. This was partly due to lack of resources. Nevertheless, the level of sensitivity of their staff, and the society in general, also needed to be raised in connection with issues such as the emotional needs of the child, foster care, and the like, were concerned.

The scenario depicted by Group 4 was one in which some group members, acting as counsellors from the Women's Centre Foundation led a discussion on teenage pregnancy and the services provided by that organisation to help teenage mothers resume their education. The disadvantages of early pregnancy were highlighted.

3.   Summary

Mrs. McNish commented that the last exercise should have made participants realise that a great deal of preparation was necessary to conduct a rap session well enough to meet the learning objectives that the counsellor would have defined in advance.

She then itemised the workshop's objectives for the peer counselling training just concluded, and received oral consensus that each one had been achieved. Finally, she said that she was looking forward to hearing what participants achieved in their attempts to implement peer counselling programmes.

4.   Participants' Evaluation

Mrs. Cooper distributed a copy of the Workshop evaluation form (See *Appendix V*) to each participant present, except one person who come that morning for the first time. A detailed report on the analysis of the responses has been attached as *Appendix VI.*

Completed forms were returned by all participants who received them, resulting in a completion rate of 100%.

Participants who were absent either on Day 1 or Day 2 but present on Day 3 (that is, they had attended for 1½ days only), were asked to record their date of absence on their forms. Five forms indicated that the respondents were absent on Day 1 (when "Mentoring" had been addressed), and two indicated absence on Day 2 (when the major portion of the "Peer

Counselling" information had been delivered). Those forms were not included in the statistical calculations, therefore, because the significant level of missing ratings under *Section A: Workshop Content* would have greatly distorted the scores per item and the overall average score. The effect of that decision was that the ratings reported here for "Content" were calculated on the basis of responses from the 22 persons who had attended the workshop for the entire 2½ day period.

On the basis of those 22 responses, "Workshop Content" received an overall rating of 4.45 out of a possible maximum average score of 5.0. This score indicates a high level of satisfaction with the information conveyed and the manner in which it was presented. Although each of the 10 statements listed for evaluation received high ratings, the two receiving the highest average score (4.68) were "Workshop materials distributed were relevant and helpful" and "I recommend the implementation of a Peer Counselling programme in my NGO". At the same time, the lowest average score (4.14) related to the statement "I now have a full understanding of Peer Counselling". A similar question about understanding Mentoring received an average rating of 4.32.

Ten (10) persons "agreed" and 10 "strongly agreed" that they now fully understood Mentoring, while 14 persons "agreed" but only 6 "strongly agreed" that they now fully understood Peer Counselling. It could be that some respondents had more prior knowledge about Mentoring than about Peer Counselling, and so felt more confident about their present understanding of the former subject.

Only two persons recorded minor negatives about the workshop (the lateness of coffee breaks; and the too short period of time allocated for some group activities).

All respondents were able to record things they had learned about each of the two topics that were the focus of the training. Each person also reported some form of follow-up activity that he or she would undertake on return to work. In addition, the complimentary overall comments documented by respondents under *"SECTION B: Participants' Comments"* support a conclusion that they had found attendance at the workshop to have been interesting and beneficial.

5.   Closure

As part of the closing exercises, Mrs. Cooper asked one person from each NGO to identify what his/her organisation would do about mentoring and peer counselling after the workshop. Indications were that they would either do more in that regard, or introduce programmes, or at least share their new knowledge with their colleagues.

Mrs. Cooper also made reference to the case study explored on the first day of the workshop, which had dealt with a 'mentee' who was depressed[8]. She emphasised that depression was an illness and all reports of depression should be taken seriously.

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[8] See Scenario #1, pg. 5 of this Report.

A participant asked what Development Associates Inc. did to ensure that NGOs implemented what they were taught. The answer given was that participants were sent to the various workshops as representatives of their organisations. It was expected, therefore, that the organisations would be interested to know what they had learnt. Participants must take responsibility for 'selling' the new ideas and methods to which they had been exposed and for using those that they could themselves implement. The way for each participant to begin was to make a full report on the training experience on his/her return to the work.

Participants were thanked for the lively involvement that had enabled learning to take place and Paula Brooks (JAD), through an interpreter, expressed thanks to the presenters and organisers of the workshop on behalf of the group. Ms. Saffrey Brown (KRC) endorsed Ms. Brooks' sentiments and said that the workshop had been entertaining, challenging and thought-provoking, and she was sure that some good was going to come out of it.

The formal part of the workshop ended at this stage but, prior to going to the dining room for lunch, Mrs. Daphne Samuels said grace. After lunch, participants dispersed.

/bpb
2000-05-16

UPLIFTING ADOLESCENTS PROJECT

MENTORING & PEER COUNSELLING WORKSHOP
May 2-4, 2000

<u>LIST OF PARTICIPANTS</u>

ORGANISATION		NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE/FAX	2	3	4
ASHÉ	1. 2.	Mr. Kevin Collins Mr. Richard Rowe	143 Mountain View Ave. Kingston 3	928-4064	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Children First	3.	Ms. Camille Taylor	Monk Street Spanish Town P.O.	984-0367	✓	✓	✓
Hope for Children	4.	Ms. Joyce Prendergast	74 Spanish Town Road Kingston	923-3594	✓	✓	✓
Jamaica Association for the Deaf*	5. 6.	Ms. Paula Brooks Ms. Simone Jackson	5 Marescaux Road Kingston 5	926-7001	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Jamaica Family Planning Association	7. 8.	Ms. Novelette Pitt Ms. Theresa Gaynor	14 King St, Box 92 St. Ann's Bay P.O.	972-0260 (Ph.) 972-2224 (F.)	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Jamaica Red Cross	9. 10.	Mrs. Daphne Samuels Ms. Joan Cooper	Central Village Spanish Town P.O.	984-7860 (Ph.) 984-8272 (F.)	✓ ✓	- ✓	✓ ✓
Kingston Restoration Company	11.	Ms. Saffrey Brown	3 Duke Street Kingston	922-3126 (Ph.) 922-0054 (F.)	✓	✓	✓
Kingston YMCA	12. 13. 14.	Mrs. Deon Lynch Ms. Sandra Hamilton Mrs. Diana Taylor	21 Hope Road Kingston 10	926-8081 (Ph.) 929-9387 (F.)	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	- ✓
Mel Nathan Institute for Social Research	15. 16. 17. 18.	Ms. Lenna Plowright Mr. Owen Dillon Ms. Jennifer Willoughby Mr. Donovan Beswick	31 Mannings Hill Road Kingston 8	931-4989 (Ph.) 931-5004 (F.)	✓ - ✓ ✓	- ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

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* The participants were accompanied by an interpreter each day.

ORGANISATION			NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE/FAX	2	3	4
Sam Sharpe Teachers' College		19. 20. 21.	Ms. Jacqueline Burnett Ms. Gracelin Williamson Mr. Grantley Black	Granville Montego Bay P.O.	952-4000 (Ph.) 952-0862 (F.)	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
St. Patrick's Foundation		22 23.	Mr. Keino Lawson Ms. Tanesha Lopez	Henderson Avenue Olympic Gardens	920-8921 (Ph.) 968-3736 (F.)	- ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Western Society for the Upliftment of Children		24. 25.	Ms. Bridgett Delmar Ms. Jascinth Rose	26 Marion Way Montego Bay P.O.	952-3377 (Ph.) 952-6187 (F.)	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation		26. 27.	Ms. Gay Williams Mrs. Jacqueline Robinson	42 Trafalgar Road Kingston 10	929-7608 (Ph.) 926-5768 (F.)	- ✓	✓ -	✓ ✓
Youth Opportunities Unlimited		28. 29. 30. 31.	Mrs. Sheila Nicholson Mrs. Sonia Watson Mr. Shae Stewart Ms. Lorraine Wilson	4 ½ Camp Road Kingston 5	759-2080 (Ph.) 759-2081 (F.)	✓ - - -	- ✓ ✓ -	- ✓ ✓ ✓
YWCA National		32. 33.	Mrs. Mildred Dean Mrs. Audrey Daley	2H Camp Road (5) Spanish Town	928-3023 984-2493	✓ -	✓ ✓	- ✓
USAID/Jamaica			Ms. Joan Davis	2 Haining Road (5)	926-3645/9	✓	-	-
UAP			Mr. Francis Valva Mr. Samuel Dowding Mrs. Sandra Cooper Mrs. Marsha Hylton	1 Holborn Road Kingston 10	929-4779	a.m p.m ✓ ✓	a.m - ✓ a.m	- - ✓ a.m
Presenters			Mrs. Betty Ann Blaine Mrs. Hope McNish	4 ½ Camp Road (4) 1-3 Worthington Terr. (5)	759-2080 968-5347	✓ -	- ✓	- ✓
Rapporteur			Mrs. B. Butler	P.O. Box 364 Kingston 19	944-2057	✓	✓	✓

ANGER MANAGEMENT EXERCISES

A.   Anger Triggers

Write down on this page your *external triggers*, the things that are done to you that anger you ― e.g., someone puts you down. Write down as many as you can think of. Do the same for *internal triggers*, or your self-talk, that gets you all worked up. Your self-talk can often be exaggerated, which can lead to angry feelings ― e.g., I am so stupid, ugly, etc.

External Triggers   **Internal Triggers**

Now that you recognize your triggers, what steps are you going to take to control the angry feelings associated with them???

B.   The Anger Iceberg

I.   Draw an iceberg on this piece of paper with the water revealing about 10% of the tip. Label the tip as Anger.

II.   Think about a time you felt angry in a situation.   (Maybe the situation that got you referred.)

III.   Write above the water the things that you did with your anger.

IV.   What choices did you make? What happened as a result? Write these above the water as well.

V.   Since anger is always the second emotion, think about the first feeling(s) you had in the experience and write them under the surface of the 'water line'. Examples: hurt, betrayal, jealousy, vulnerability or frustration. This should show you that anger is just the "tip of the iceberg" and that it is the emotions lying beneath the surface that must be attended to.

VI.   Did the problem get solved? Do you need to tell people how you felt?

VII. Evaluate your choices and include what may have happened had you used an assertive response.

C.   "I" Statements (this is an interactive role-play exercise)

A true "I" statement says something about the self without criticising the other person and without holding the other person responsible for your feelings and reactions.

Using the following "I" statement formula might help communicate clearly what is going on:

I feel… when you… and I need you to…

For example: Jim tells a racist or sexist joke.

Option 1:   "You idiot, go get a life!"

Option 2:   "I feel offended by racist jokes and I would prefer you not tell me anymore."